

## **New York Times**

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### **Bridgeport Lauded By Education Group**

Bridgeport Public Schools was one of five school districts selected as a finalist for the 2006 Broad Prize for Urban Education, the Broad (pronounced brode) Foundation in Los Angeles has announced.

The prize, awarded annually since 1999, recognizes low-income urban districts where students have made the most academic gains.

"Those are the districts where clearly the hard work is to be done in terms of student achievement," said Erica Lepping, a spokeswoman for the foundation.

A panel of national education leaders selected the finalists, which also include Boston Public Schools, the Jersey City School District, the New York City Department of Education and the Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Florida.

According to the foundation, Bridgeport was selected because it had greatly reduced the achievement gap between black and Hispanic students and white students, and because its elementary and high school students had done better than expected in reading and math over the last three years.

"People are working very hard with limited resources to make a difference in this city, and this is an indication of that," said John J. Ramos Sr., the superintendent of schools in Bridgeport. "We need to seize this moment, and understand that with proper resources we can really turn this district around."

The foundation will send a team of educators and researchers to each of the districts over the next two months to further evaluate them. The winner will be announced at the Museum of Modern Art in New York on Sept. 20.

The winning district will receive \$500,000 in scholarship money. The other finalists will each get \$125,000.